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INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
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RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0556  
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 0478  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 2083  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0888  
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE 0113  
RHMFIS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RHMFIS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0997

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 000229

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV FR SG MR

SUBJECT: FNDD RESPONDS NEGATIVELY TO FRENCH AND SENEGALESE GESTURES

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Dennis Hankins for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) Summary: President Abdallahi's Chief of Staff Ahmed Kabed Ould Hammoudi called Charge evening of March 28 to convey President Abdallahi's astonishment with statements made by French President Sarkozy to the effect that there was no opposition to the coup, and to advise that the President and FNDD would rebuff an unwanted mediation initiative from the Senegalese. The FNDD went public with the main points on March 29.

¶2. (C) France: Ould Hammoudi noted President Abdallahi's concern over statements made by President Sarkozy on March 27 that the coup in Mauritania, "had not resulted in protests from parliamentarians or demonstrations in the streets of Mauritania." Ould Hammoudi noted that the statement was, of course, factually wrong as was a statement that Sarkozy had spoken to President Abdallahi since the coup (no such call ever took place). Following last week's statement by Foreign Minister Kouchner in Jeune Afrique suggesting Abdallahi should come back only long enough to oversee the elections Aziz has planned for June 6, Ould Hammoudi stressed their great concern over the direction of French policy. The President had felt he had a certain amount of "principled" support in the French Presidency, but feared the "pragmatists" in the Foreign Ministry, military and security services had convinced Sarkozy to accept the coup. On March 29, National Assembly President Messaoud Ould Boulkheir released a statement noting the ongoing political and popular opposition to the August 6 coup and accusing France of reverting to an African policy of older times that supported dictators over democracy for commercial and security interests. Comment: We continue to meet many in the French Mission here who tend to discount the importance of the FNDD and allied opposition to the coup and who advocate making the best of a bad situation by supporting the regime's electoral plan however flawed that plan may be. End Comment.

¶3. (C) Senegal: Ould Hammoudi also briefed Charge on the surprise visit of Senegalese Foreign Minister Cheikh Tidiane Gadio who went to Lemden on March 28. Ould Hammoudi said the visit had been unannounced and that Gadio had conveyed a "fraternal invitation" from President Wade for Abdallahi to come visit in Senegal. Ould Hammoudi stressed that Gadio, "did not propose a mediation nor offer any type of proposal." The FNDD was therefore upset to hear statements that Senegal was prepared to mediate a deal. Following the debacle of the Qadhafi "mediation" and the overtly pro-coup leanings of

President Wade, Ould Hammoudi said the FNDD would respond that "the time was not appropriate for a mediation effort at this time." The FNDD declared March 29 that there would be no basis for mediation until the military dropped its unilateral electoral plan. Charge asked Ould Hammoudi if the President was against ANY mediation or just a SENECALESE mediation. Ould Hammoudi responded that the problem was obviously with the Senegalese but that the President wouldn't say that publicly. Comment: In previous conversations the FNDD leadership has shown some willingness to consider a Francophonie mediation under Abdou Diouf or an African Union mediation under either former AU Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konare or under the Burkinabe presidency of the Peace and Security Council of the AU.

HANKINS